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Charity sport event participants and fundraising: An examination of constraints and  
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### **Abstract**

Charity sport events provide participants with a meaningful event experience, and the opportunity to support a charitable cause is a critical component of this experience. This opportunity often involves fundraising, either as a requirement of event participation or as an option to supplement registration. However, fundraising as part of charity sport event participation is a difficult task. In the current research, the authors examine the challenges faced by charity sport event participants in soliciting donations, and the effort made to overcome these challenges. Constraint negotiation served as a theoretical framework to guide this examination. Semi-structured interviews ( $N = 27$ ) were conducted with Triathlon Pink participants to discuss their fundraising process and their attitudes towards fundraising. Four constraints were revealed: lack of receptivity among potential donors, perceived lack of money from potential donors, discomfort in asking, and lack of time. These constraints were negotiated through three strategies: narrative, prizes and incentives, and emphasising that any bit helps. Based upon the themes uncovered, charity sport event managers can implement increased education of fundraisers and point of sale donations within the registration process.

*Keywords:* charity sport events, fundraising, constraints, constraint negotiation

## 1 Introduction

Charity sport events are important vehicles for charitable organisations as these events are not only an opportunity to promote active and healthy lifestyles, but also a mechanism for charities to raise funds and promote their brand (King, 2004). Fundraising on behalf of a charity has become a critical component of a number of large-scale participatory sport events, such as the Nike Women's Marathon and Tough Mudder, and is central to the charity sport event experience (Scott & Solomon, 2003). A charity sport event is a participatory sport event that generates funds for a specific charitable cause from participants in exchange for their opportunity to participate in the event (Woolf, Heere, & Walker, 2013). These events are distinguished by their alignment with a specific charity, rather than a collection of causes (Inoue, Heffernan, Yamaguchi, & Filo, 2018), as well as the notion that a portion of event registration fees goes towards the designated charity while participants are encouraged to further fundraise for the cause (Filo, Groza, & Fairley, 2012; Taylor & Shanka, 2008; Won, Park, & Turner, 2010).

A large portion of donations received by charities are generated through third-party fundraising such as charity sport event participation (Coffman, 2017). However, third party fundraisers are faced with a number of challenges in attracting donations (Barton & Hall, 2011). In the current research, we examine one such challenge—reluctance towards fundraising among charity sport event participants—in the context of Triathlon Pink, a charity sport event that raises funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF).

Fundraising is being viewed increasingly critically and with a sceptical eye. This is evidenced by a survey of office workers conducted by Rigby (2011) inquiring about what annoyed them most about co-workers. In the survey, 'e-mails seeking personal sponsorship' (i.e., donations) was ranked as the fourth most annoying practice (Rigby, 2011). In addition, the widespread growth of the charity sport event sector has contributed to a vast range of

charities to support and opportunities for which charity sport event participants can fundraise. With the continued growth of the charity sport event sector in mind, along with the aforementioned scepticism towards fundraising, charity sport event participants may grow reluctant to solicit donations from their peer network as part of their participation. The purpose of this research is to examine the challenges faced by charity sport event participants in soliciting donations, and the effort made to overcome these challenges.

Constraint negotiation provided the framework to address this research purpose. Constraints have been described in the sport and leisure research as factors that individuals must overcome in order for participation to take place (Jackson & Rucks, 1995). To overcome constraints and participate in an activity, an individual must negotiate the constraint (Jackson, Crawford, & Godbey, 1993). We conceptualise fundraising through charity sport events as the activity, potential challenges faced by participants in fundraising as constraints, and the strategies for overcoming these challenges as constraint negotiation.

## **2 Charity sport events**

Charity sport events provide participants with a meaningful experience (Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008, 2009). An array of research has investigated the factors that drive participants to get involved with charity sport events, as well as the factors that create this meaning (e.g., Won et al., 2010). Factors such as the opportunity to challenge yourself physically, socialise with fellow participants, help individuals in need, and advance a charity's mission have been found as benefits obtained through the charity sport event experience (Filo et al., 2008). This stream of research has also highlighted the importance of supporting the charity through fundraising. For instance, Won, Park, Lee, and Chung (2011) revealed that supporting the charity was the most important factor driving participants in Multiple Sclerosis walking events. Similarly, personal involvement with the good cause supported by the event was one

of the most influential motives uncovered by Bennett, Mousley, Kitchin, and Ali-Choudhury's (2007) investigation of mass sporting events with charitable connections.

Meanwhile, cause-related fundraisers are an important market segment for charity sport event managers to engage (Wood, Snelgrove, & Danylchuk, 2010). Furthermore, as a value-based factor which encompasses broader goals for charity sport event participants such as raising awareness for—and supporting—the designated charity, cause contributes to a meaningful charity sport event experience (Filo et al., 2009). The fundraising component of a charity sport event influences an individual's decision to participate in the event and contributes to the meaning experienced, which can also impact the individual participant. For example, Rundio, Heere, and Newland (2014) revealed that doing something for others through fundraising for an event aligned with a charitable cause positively impacted participant's sense of self-worth.

The relative influence of the cause in driving individuals to participate in charity sport events, and its contribution to the meaningful experience afforded by the event, underscores the importance of fundraising within charity sport events. However, the requirements and expectations towards fundraising can be viewed as demanding for charity sport event participants (Hendriks & Peelen, 2013). These perceived demands can translate to constraints to fundraise, and in turn, a potential reluctance to participate (Mirehie, Buning, & Gibson, 2017). Accordingly, these constraints must be negotiated to facilitate fundraising and participation. The theoretical framework of constraint negotiation is reviewed next.

### **3 Theoretical framework**

Constraints are factors “that inhibit people's ability to participate in leisure activities, to spend more time doing so, to take advantage of leisure services or to achieve a desired level of satisfaction” (Jackson, 1988, p. 203). Examples of constraints can include lack of money or lack of time, as well as factors such as lack of skill, lack of interest, and lack of

partner (Chick, Hsu, Yeh, & Hsieh, 2015). Constraints can negatively impact participation, satisfaction, emotional wellbeing and quality of life (Spiers & Walker, 2009). In addition, the perception and impact of constraints varies based upon individual factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, age, education level and marital status (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997).

Existing research on constraints has identified three levels, or categories, of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural (e.g., Crawford et al., 1991). Intrapersonal constraints refer to individual psychological states (e.g., stress, depression, perceived skill level) that may interact with an individual's activity preferences and willingness. Next, interpersonal constraints relate to prospective co-participants or partners in the activity. Being unable to find a partner to participate with represents an interpersonal constraint. A lack of interest or support among one's peer network (e.g., friends and family) reflects additional interpersonal constraints (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). Meanwhile, structural constraints include financial resources and time availability (Raymore, Godbey, & Crawford, 1994). These structural constraints are the most frequently experienced constraints (Jackson, 2000).

The three categories of constraints affect individuals in an interrelated manner (Jackson et al., 1993), while constraints can evolve over time and can vary depending on the individuals (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). Beyond factors lacking for an individual (e.g., lack of time, lack of money, lack of interest), competing priorities for an individual such as family and work commitments and other household responsibilities, along with physical discomfort, injury or lack of skill, represent constraints that individuals often confront (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997; Andrade et al., 2017). Notably, intrapersonal constraints, such as a lack of skill and perceived difficulty of the activity, are higher among nonparticipants, whereas participants report higher levels of structural constraints (Gilbert & Hudson, 2000).

While constraints can encompass participation broadly, we focus on constraints to fundraising for charity sport event participation. For the purpose of the current research, constraints represent factors that may limit a charity sport event participant's ability to fundraise for a designated charity as part of event participation. To assess constraints in the charity sport event context, participants in the current study were asked about their fundraising experience, the challenges that confronted their fundraising, and an individual's least favourite part of the fundraising process to understand the constraints they faced in the charity sport event examined.

Fundraising may relate to both intrapersonal and interpersonal constraints in that a charity sport event participant may feel hesitant about asking others for donations (intrapersonal) or may not be able to secure donations from their own network of friends and colleagues (interpersonal). Fundraising may also involve structural constraints, as a charity sport event participant may not be able to devote the required time to fundraise prior to the event. Notably, constraints may be perceived without directly impacting an individual's engagement in the activity (Kay & Jackson, 1991). As such, charity sport event participants may identify a constraint that could inhibit their fundraising without exhibiting a reduction in their fundraising efforts and achievements. Furthermore, an individual's overall level of interest and previous experience with an activity can contribute to an increased likelihood of overcoming constraints (Wright & Goodale, 1991). Hence, previous positive fundraising experiences with a charity sport event could make an individual more likely to overcome constraints to fundraising.

In a participation setting such as a charity sport event, the removal of all constraints is not realistic (Shogan, 2002). Instead, as noted above, constraints must be overcome by a charity sport event participant. The process of overcoming constraints is constraint negotiation—a product of the interactions between the factors perceived by an individual that



may inhibit participation in an activity and the motivation of that individual to participate in the activity. Constraint negotiation can involve increasing awareness of opportunities to participate, acquiring additional skills or knowledge, altering the timing and frequency of participation, or modifying one's own life to allow for participation (Jackson et al., 1993). A more positive attitude towards the activity is an important factor in negotiating and overcoming constraints (White, 2008). To examine constraint negotiation within fundraising for a charity sport event, participants in this study were asked to describe how they have worked to overcome the challenges outlined in the current research context, as well as how they interact with their network of prospective donors.

Successful negotiation of constraints can predict satisfaction with the activity (Elkins, Beggs, & Chourka, 2007). Constraint negotiation can be undertaken cognitively and behaviourally, with most people negotiating constraints behaviourally (Jackson & Rucks, 1995). Notably, participation after negotiating constraints will likely be different from participation without experiencing constraints in terms of frequency, intensity, and timing (Jackson et al., 1993). Consequently, a charity sport event participant who experiences overcoming constraints to fundraising may still not allocate as much time to fundraising or may raise a lower amount of funds than expected. Beyond negotiation at the individual level, overcoming constraints can also be facilitated by managerial initiatives such as increased flexibility and enhanced education and training (Alexandris & Carroll, 1999). By examining constraints to fundraising and the negotiation of constraints, the current research can inform strategy for charity sport event managers to facilitate fundraisers overcoming these barriers.

### **3.1 Constraints and constraint negotiation for event participation**

Constraints have been examined across a variety of sport event contexts. Lamont and Kennelly (2010) built upon the idea of constraints embodying competing priorities and revealed that factors such as personal preferences, personal relationships, and external factors

represent constraints for participation in triathlons. In a later study examining triathletes and constraints (Lamont, Kennelly, & Wilson, 2012), these factors were then conceptualised across seven domains, which included relationships, sociability, domestic, financial, leisure, well-being, and work. These domains reflect competing needs and desires between an individual's everyday life and that individual's pursuit of competing in triathlons, and it may be difficult for an individual to fully satisfy both pursuits (Lamont et al., 2012). Meanwhile, Ito and Hikoji (2018) revealed that context specific constraints such as an individual's personal record are relevant to sport event participants.

Correspondingly, event participants must negotiate constraints. Kennelly, Moyle, and Lamont (2013) described constraint negotiation among triathletes as adaptation, which involved accepting opportunity costs, exercising time management, and demonstrating flexibility and opportunism in participating in events. Based upon the wide variety of constraints that exist for individuals looking to complete a marathon, Ridinger, Funk, Jordan, and Kaplianadou (2012) uncovered negotiation efficacy, or an individual's confidence in his/her ability to negotiate constraints, as an important factor for marathon runners. Similarly, Ito and Hikoji (2018) suggested that constraint negotiation for sport event participants will vary based upon an individual's event involvement. Meanwhile, Rice, Aicher, and Hambrick (2018) suggest that benefits derived from the event experience (e.g., increased self-esteem and improved health) can facilitate the forming of a new identity that assists in negotiating and overcoming constraints. Internal motivation, including challenging yourself physically and healthy living, have also been found to lead an individual to engage in more active negotiation of constraints (Aicher, Simmons, & Cintron, 2018).

Constraints have been examined in the charity sport event context. However, the focus has been on constraints to participation in general rather than to fundraising in particular (Won et al., 2011). For example, Mirehie et al. (2017) examined charity sport event

participants and nonparticipants in a charity running event and found that these groups did not differ drastically in terms of running behaviour and attitudes. However, non-negotiable factors, such as injuries or participation in an alternate event, constrained nonparticipants from taking part in the event.

An opportunity exists for investigation of constraints to fundraising within the charity sport event context. Gladden, Mahony, and Apostolopoulou (2005) noted increasing challenges for sport-related non-profit organisations in soliciting donations, requiring more advanced approaches to fundraising. Meanwhile, fundraising is an integral aspect of the charity sport event experience allowing participants to share their identity and support for others (Snelgrove & Wood, 2010). Hence, the current exploration of constraints to fundraising can provide insights on this important activity and extend prior work on constraints and constraint negotiation in sport events (Lamont et al., 2012; Ridinger et al., 2012) and for charity sport event participation (Mirehie et al., 2017; Won et al., 2011).

In the current research, we examine the constraints faced by charity sport event participants in soliciting donations, and the effort to overcome these constraints, by advancing two research questions:

**Research Question 1:** What constraints do charity sport event participants face while soliciting donations from their network?

**Research Question 2:** How do charity sport event participants negotiate the constraints they are faced with while soliciting donations from their network?

## **4 Method**

### **4.1 Research context**

Triathlon Pink serves as the research context for this investigation. Triathlon Pink is a triathlon series which raises funds for the NBCF. The series takes place in six cities (i.e., Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Gold Coast, Brisbane, and The Sunshine Coast) across Australia

with each event attracting approximately 750 participants. Triathlon Pink allows participants to choose among four course options (i.e., Ultra, Long, Medium, and Short) with an emphasis on fun and enjoyment instead of intense physical activity. The event has been in place since 2007 and has thus far raised over \$1.89 million for the NBCF. A portion of participants' registration fees can be given to the NBCF, and all participants are further encouraged to fundraise beyond this option. The NBCF is a community-funded non-profit organisation established in Australia in 1994 that awards money to research projects to improve the health of individuals affected by breast cancer. The established history of the event (e.g., over ten years of operation), along with the benefitting charity (i.e., NBCF) and the idea that participants are encouraged to fundraise as part of their registration, made Triathlon Pink an appropriate context for answering the research questions.

#### **4.2 Participants**

We conducted semi-structured interviews with participants in the 2017 Triathlon Pink event ( $N = 27$ ). Interviews were selected as this mechanism provides flexibility in both the direction of questions based upon responses provided, as well as the flexibility afforded in scheduling (Rabionet, 2011). Furthermore, interviews were deemed an appropriate data collection approach due to the exploratory nature of the current research (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006). All interviews were conducted via the telephone to account for geographic distance between interviewers and interviewees. All interviewees were women. Interviewees ranged in age from 24 to 62, and 20 of the 27 interviewees had completed at least a bachelor's degree. This aligns with the Triathlon Pink participant population, which is predominantly women, 75% between the ages of 20 – 65, and educated (personal communication, 2017). The highest proportion of interviewees had completed the Ultra course (33%) followed by the Long course (29%). See Table 1 for the demographic

breakdown of the interviewees, including number of years the individual had participated in Triathlon Pink.

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Insert Table 1  
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#### 4.3 Procedures

A partnership was in place between the research team and the event management company delivering the Triathlon Pink event (i.e., The Event Crew) to facilitate access for data collection. A representative from the Event Crew sent out an email invitation to participate in the interviews to their database of registered participants. This email included a brief overview of the research purpose, along with an invitation to contact the first author to schedule the interview for those who were interested in participating. Convenience sampling was utilised to accommodate for the budget and geographic constraints in place for the research team, and this sampling technique can be used to address pragmatic concerns in academic research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Data saturation was achieved after 27 interviews as the same ideas were being repeated by interviewees, with no new themes emerging (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

As previously noted, each interview was conducted over the phone, and the interviews were conducted by members of the research team. The interviews lasted between 12 and 28 minutes in length, and each interview was audio recorded. As an incentive to participate, each interviewee was given a \$50 gift card to a national grocery chain. The accuracy of the data was ensured during the data collection process. Member checks (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985) were conducted during the interviews as the interviewer provided a summary of the main points discussed within the conversations at the conclusion of each phone call. Upon

completion of the interviews, the audio recordings were submitted to a third-party transcription company (i.e., rev.com).

#### **4.4 Materials**

The interview guide consisted of four sections. First, a selection of demographic questions (e.g., age, education level, number of years participating in Triathlon Pink, course completed, fundraising amount) were utilised to profile each interviewee. Second, three questions focused on the Triathlon Pink and fundraising experiences were employed at the outset of the interview. Next, interviewees were asked to describe the benefits they receive from fundraising as well as any successes they experienced while fundraising across three questions. Finally, three questions designed to elicit their attitude towards fundraising concluded the interview. The development of the interview guide was informed by constraint negotiation (Jackson et al., 1993), as well as the notion that event participants may experience difficulties fundraising (Filo, Lock, Sherry, & Quang Huynh, 2017).

#### **4.5 Data analysis**

The digital audio recordings derived from each interview were transcribed by a third party, and the transcriptions were reviewed by the research team for accuracy. After this review, the transcriptions were analysed thematically in six phases, (a) getting familiar with the data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In getting familiar with the data, Filo read through each interview transcription repeatedly through the lens of constraints (e.g., Jackson et al., 1993) to generate initial codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interview commentary concerning the challenges confronting charity sport event participants' fundraising efforts, the evolution of fundraising through events, and the worst aspects of fundraising were coded as constraints. Meanwhile,

discussion of strategies employed to optimise fundraising and fundraising keys to success were coded as factors that reflect constraint negotiation.

Through this process of generating codes by repeatedly reading through the transcriptions, seven themes were identified: lack of receptivity among potential donors, perceived lack of money among potential donors, discomfort in asking, and lack of time as constraints, along with prizes and incentives, narrative, and emphasising that any bit helps as constraint negotiation tactics. The seven themes identified were then reviewed by the other members of the research team. Specifically, the transcripts, themes, and representative quotations within each theme were provided to the research team for discussion concerning the themes and quotations. The research team agreed on the themes and the corresponding quotations under each theme. This discussion demonstrated intercoder agreement (Carey, Morgan, & Oxtoby, 1996).

Filo developed a label and operational definition for each of the identified themes, and additional representative quotations were identified for each theme. The themes and corresponding quotations were then reviewed by the research team for overlap. The results are reported in the next section, and representative quotations are used to describe each theme narratively. The repeated reviewing of the interview transcripts, along with the presentation of initial findings (i.e., themes and quotations), were utilised to ensure integrity throughout the data analysis process. Meanwhile, the narrative reporting of findings below allows for the demonstration of vividness within the presentation of data, and the steps outlined and followed within the data analysis process illustrate explicitness within the analysis of data. Collectively, these steps were taken to avert threats to data trustworthiness (Whittlemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001).

## **5 Results**

The themes uncovered within the analysis are described below. First, as preliminary findings that offer insights into the characteristics of the event examined (i.e., Triathlon Pink) and its participants, we illustrate how interviewees describe the event experience, including the factors that drove individuals to participate in this event. Next, in response to Research Question 1, the four constraints are revealed and detailed: lack of receptivity among potential donors, perceived lack of money among potential donors, discomfort in asking, and lack of time. The constraints uncovered within the interviews reflect interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints (Crawford et al., 1991). From there, the themes underscoring constraint negotiation are outlined to address Research Question 2: narrative, prizes and incentives, and emphasising that any bit helps. These themes represent behavioural responses to constraints (Jackson & Rucks, 1995) that involve modifications to allow for fundraising (Jackson et al., 1993). Illustrative quotations are provided for each theme.

### **5.1 The event experience**

Interviewees were overall positive about the event experience. Participants described the event as a “fun process” (Leslie) and an “inclusive event” (Jacky). The social component of the event was portrayed as a critical factor in participant enjoyment. This component included individuals who were participating with friends and family, participants who were able to meet new people via the event, and the enthusiasm of the event staff and volunteers. The event experience was described as a chance to “socialise,” “engage with people” and “bring people together” (Renee). The social component is exemplified by the following quotes from Kris, who described how she recruited four friends to participate, “I proposed that it would be a really fun thing to do together” and then reflected on the experience in stating, “I enjoyed that we can all do something together, and do something really positive together.” Kris later added, “I did just want to add there that it [the event] is such a really positive experience, and I really appreciate the opportunity to be part of it.”



In describing why they chose to participate in the event, interviewees spoke to the positive feelings that come from supporting a charitable cause. In underscoring this factor, interviewees reinforced the importance of giving back. Katheryn described herself as “lucky to be able to give back to the community.” Joslyn detailed how she felt good as a result of both supporting a cause and achieving a fundraising goal. The positive feelings and role of giving back is evident in the following quote from Rachel:

When you even go there to do the event you get a feel, you know, you do get a good feeling because everyone's just in a good mood and positive and you know that they've all done a similar thing. They've all spent time training for the event and worked on the fundraising. So yeah, just a feel-good vibe.

Interviewees also depicted the physical challenge and fitness inherent to the event as a factor driving their participation. Angela noted that the event allowed her to “increase my fitness and keep that fitness level,” while Layla indicated that the event was an opportunity to try “a new type of fitness.” Rhonda mentioned the event was “a good excuse to get a bit of fitness under my belt.” The combination of being able to socialise with others, supporting a worthy cause and being physically active through the event contributed to a positive event experience wherein participants were more inclined to work to overcome constraints.

## **5.2 Constraints**

### **5.2.1 Lack of receptivity among potential donors**

Interviewees described attitudes of their donor base as potential constraints. The first theme described, lack of receptivity among potential donors, can be defined as a lack of receptivity to requests for donations from a fundraiser’s network. Marcy highlighted these individuals as a portion of her network, “Look, some people just aren’t interested at all and they can’t be bothered.... You’re gonna get a percentage of people that don’t want to contribute money...there’s just some people that aren’t very, you know, enthusiastic about

helping.” Sally indicated that it was difficult identifying potential donors who were interested in the cause and giving in describing her challenges, “Finding people that are open to a) listening, and b) the cause that you’re trying to fundraise for...just finding the right people, people that are willing to support, that’s been the biggest challenge.”

Participants revealed that they faced challenges with potential donors who expressed some interest in donating, but did not follow through. Andrea stated, “I do think it’s harder to get people to commit. It’s really hard to get people to actually hand over the money they say they’re going to. That’s a bit challenging.” Hannah had a similar story:

It’s always, ‘Hey, yeah cool, I’ve give you 20 bucks. I’ll give it to you later.’ And then you have to ask them again. And then you’ve got to ask them again. And I think you just have to take that, um, they’re either going to give it to me or they’re not going to give it to me.

And this was further described by Samantha:

People saying, ‘Yeah, I’ll contribute, I’ll contribute’ and then they don’t...It’s like, ‘Hey I’ve signed up to do this and support me and support this cause. And here’s the reason why you should support the cause.’ And then people start saying ‘Yes! Yes!’ and then they don’t commit. That’s the bit I don’t like.

### **5.2.2 Perceived lack of money from potential donors**

A perception of the fundraisers’ network that was articulated by interviewees as a constraint to fundraising was perceived lack of money from potential donors. This theme can be defined as concerns regarding the financial resources among a participant’s network that could inhibit the ability to donate. These concerns were encapsulated by Layla, “You know, most of my friends we’re not exactly, well you know we’re very early in our careers. Not high paid jobs. So people struggle to be even able to make donations.” Andrea also shared that younger adults present a challenge for soliciting donations,

I don't want to put them under pressure unless you know they are okay with money and stuff. Life is expensive you know, especially in my age bracket, we're all trying to buy houses and things so they don't have a lot of spare money.

Krystelle indicated that this was not just an issue for individuals early in their careers because "budgets are a lot tighter on families at the moment so it's harder and harder to give."

Marcy described the hesitation from some individuals within her network with the following, "They're hesitant. I think a lot of people don't like to just give out money." When asked about the challenges she faced fundraising, Kim replied, "Obviously money. People don't have any money to spare." Jolene described how a lack of money not only impacted whether or not someone donated, but also how much they donated, "When it comes to, 'would you like to add more on?' It's like, 'oh no.' Because that's more of the budget at that stage."

### **5.2.3 Discomfort in asking**

Beyond themes centred on perceptions of participant's network, internal factors were discussed in the interviews. Interviewees indicated that they do not like asking other people for donations, and that this was a constraint for fundraising for Triathlon Pink. Discomfort in asking can be defined as a reluctance to solicit donations from friends and family because asking for money makes the individual uncomfortable. Andrea described this constraint in blunt terms, "I don't really like hounding people for money.... I hate asking people for money. That's horrible." Leslie agreed in relaying what she finds most difficult about fundraising, "And the worst, the hardest part for me is to ask. That's really hard." Angela depicted resistance to asking for donations as something personal to her by stating that, "I'm not a very pushy person.... I think that's my own personal, very personal challenge...not wanting to ask people that you know for money."

In communicating discomfort in asking others for financial donations, references were made to the unease inherent to asking. While Jacky shared a similar sentiment, “I might feel a bit awkward sometimes asking for money.” Renee described herself in a way that aligned with this notion, “I think there’s a little bit of an element of ‘I’m too awkward to ask.’” When participants were asked about their least favourite aspect of fundraising, asking for donations was mentioned. Cassie said that the worst aspect of fundraising was “Just asking people I guess.” When posed the same question, Kelly revealed, “Probably the feeling that I’ve got to, um, like I’m asking for stuff.”

#### **5.2.4 Lack of time**

Interviewees further pointed to challenges prioritising and finding time to fundraise as a constraint. Lack of time is defined as an inability to make time to fundraise for the event. Carissa described her fundraising effort with, “Just getting the time to, to actually do the fundraising, that’s the challenge.” Marcy further explained the lack of time by mentioning that “life’s so fast and so busy now.”

Interviewees referenced a lack of time when describing the most difficult part of fundraising for Triathlon Pink. Rachel simply said, “Just getting it done by the due date.” Sally replied, “Getting the motivation to actually get out there and do it. Um, finding the time, mostly just time.” Lucy indicated that fundraising required planning and that this planning required time: “The challenge is around actually planning. Thinking of events and planning them. And scheduling them.” Renee detailed how it was difficult to put forth time and effort with little to no guarantee that there would be success, “I don’t want to put a lot of time and effort into fundraising and then still not raise very much and feel bad about it.”

### **5.3 Constraint negotiation**

#### **5.3.1 Narrative**

The first constraint negotiation strategy explained by interviewees was narrative. This negotiation strategy was used to address both lack of interest among potential donors and lack of money among potential donors. This theme is defined as providing prospective donors with a storyline to illustrate the cause and justify the charity. Danielle detailed the narrative she approached her donors with, “I said, you know, something to the effect of ‘instead of having that extra glass of wine at the Christmas party, put your hand in your pocket.’ I used something like that.” Layla offered the following:

I just always make it quite personal. Like a personal story, ‘cause I’ve had family members affected by cancer.... And then they might feel a bit more connected to the cause. I always like to include some info on where the money’s gonna go, like what that’s going to help with....Like, the money will buy fundraising equipment.

Samantha further expressed how successful fundraisers need to mix personal messaging and informative messaging in soliciting donations:

My fundraising is all about the personal. It’s all personal. The key to success is being knowledgeable in the area that you’re fundraising, or the cause that you’re fundraising for. It’s the personal connection and using it.... The story content, you know, sharing these stories is something that’s quite powerful for me.

The personal side was also a powerful tool for Jacky who provided “a personal background about how it’s [cancer] affected me and how amazing it would be to find a cure.... I think that’s why it was easier to really raise money. I suppose because I was passionate about it.”

Kim indicated that passion and storytelling was the key to her fundraising in saying “You have to really believe in what you support, and be really passionate about it, and I think that will give you the most success in your fundraising. And you sort of keep going at it.” Sally emphasised the importance of personalising the story that she tells donors:

You've got at least some personal element in there, and you can put your own personal spin on it as well, so it can be more along the lines of, 'Look, I'm doing this, and for me, doing this for the first time, how about you guys support not just me, but a really good cause in the process?'

Interviewees indicated that narratives allowed them to appeal to donors. Kelly revealed that her strategy for asking is "I send out an email on payday, where the forecast was looking really bad for the day so I reminded people that it was going to be quite a terrible day, so I could appeal to their sympathy." Kris's appeal to her donors was explained as "Just bring your heart to people and just remind them to compare themselves, compare their situation to others."

Katheryn detailed how the narrative she created alongside of her daughter who was also participating and fundraising, encompassed the entire event experience:

We just promoted the whole training experience up to the triathlon. So we did everything we could just to make as much noise as we could coming up to the event. We did some little videos explaining that the Breast Cancer Foundation was doing, and sharing with their research, and their support... We made lots and lots of noise within our friend group and some local community groups.

Katheryn also indicated that she and her daughter enlisted the local media to share their story as her daughter "did an interview on our local radio station." While Katheryn and her daughter wanted to share their story with as many people as possible, she did acknowledge that a balance needed to be struck, "I think that you have to find that point where you make noise, and you market it, but you're not being annoying at the same time."

### **5.3.2 Prizes and incentives**

To overcome the constraints such as discomfort in asking, interviewees used prizes and incentives to attract donations and bolster fundraising. Prizes and incentives is defined as

the deployment of prizes, raffles or a form of reciprocity in exchange for fundraising dollars.

Rachel described her strategy:

I find it easier to say ‘look, do you want to buy a raffle ticket?’ It’s not as off putting as saying ‘just give me money.’ Because then they think, ‘oh god, I might win that new Garmin watch or I might win that big Cadbury box of chocolates.’ I got prizes and had raffles, and I booked out a cinema and I put a movie on. Some of it goes to the charity, and some of it goes to the cinema.

Sydney relayed how she uses:

A benefit for people giving money, whether it be that they see a movie, but overpay. Or that they’re going to a barbeque and pay money to do so. Or they’ve got like a chance to win something if it’s a raffle.

She further elaborated on the barbeques that she organises to raise funds, “I had a barbeque and charge people \$10 and then got donations for food. I tried to do activities where people are gaining something, they’re not just giving money for nothing so to speak.”

Rhonda further stated that food could be used as an incentive for donations, “I did a morning tea and I had lots of friends come over to bake things that we then sold for donations.” Leslie indicated that she requested donations in lieu of presents for her son’s birthday to incentivise donors. She described this strategy with the following:

Every year my son’s birthday instead of asking for presents, we do some fundraising and we are doing so this year...So the easiest I find is just, um kind of swapping. I know they are wanting to do something. And then instead of directing that to my son receiving gifts, I redirect willingness of people to help.... I redirect them by asking to make a difference in someone else’s life. That’s how I would summarise my strategy.

### **5.3.3 Emphasising that any bit helps**

In negotiating constraints towards fundraising, interviewees took on the mindset that any donations collected would assist the charity. This negotiation strategy addressed constraints such as lack of time and lack of money from potential donors. Emphasising that any bit helps is defined as recognition that some fundraising is better than no fundraising among charity sport event participants. Constance provided her rationale for this approach in stating that “I think it’s a success if I’ve raised any sort of money. I just put it out there and see what comes back at me.” Tamara revealed a similar attitude, “With the pink tri, if I raise a dollar, if I raise a thousand dollars, I will be happy with whatever I achieve.”

Layla made it apparent that it was important to communicate that every bit helps to potential donors, “I just really make it clear that every single dollar counts, and that sort of thing.” Participants also explained how setting goals was important, but it was equally important to not obsess over the goal. Rachel elaborated, “I set a goal, but if I don’t make it, I’m just happy with what I’ve raised. I’m a striver, so I aim, but if I don’t get it, it’s not the end of the world.” Rhonda shared a similar sentiment:

Everything you do is gonna benefit. Every cupcake that you make is gonna be sold and be another two dollars towards your fundraising. I’m extremely goal-oriented and very driven, so having that in the back of my head, every two dollars matters, that’s huge, you know.

## **6 Discussion**

In answering the first research question which addressed what constraints charity sport event participants face while soliciting donations from their network, four constraints were uncovered: lack of receptivity among potential donors, perceived lack of money among potential donors, discomfort in asking, and lack of time. The constraints that emerged from the interviews each align with the three categories of constraints, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Lack of receptivity among potential donors and perceived lack of money



among potential donors reflect interpersonal constraints in that each factor relates to perceptions of co-participants and/or partners (i.e., prospective donors). Here, the charity sport event participant is reliant upon an individual's willingness to assist with a donation, reflecting distinction from traditional leisure constraints (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997).

Discomfort in asking is an intrapersonal constraint underscored by an internal reluctance and attitude towards fundraising. Lack of time represents a structural constraint related to time availability (Raymore et al., 1994). Meanwhile, lack of interest and commitment from donors reflects aspects of donor fatigue (Brown & Minty, 2008).

The lack of time for fundraising cited by charity sport event participants reflects traditional leisure constraints wherein an inability to make time for an activity is frequently acknowledged (Chick et al., 2015). Lack of time within the charity sport event context further reinforces the importance of time in a donor transaction (Charbonneau, Cloutier & Carrier, 2016). Meanwhile traditional leisure constraints such as lack of money and lack of interest share some overlap with perceived lack of money among potential donors, as well as lack of receptivity among potential donors (Chick et al., 2015) through the focus on financial resources for, and enthusiasm towards, the cause. However, within the current research, these two factors relate to charity sport event participant attitudes towards prospective co-participants (i.e., potential donors) rather than characteristics of these charity sport events (Raymore et al., 1994). Consequently, different negotiation strategies may be necessary to overcome these constraints on behalf of potential donors.

With regard to the second research question—how charity sport event participants negotiate the constraints they are faced with while soliciting donations from their network—three negotiation strategies were revealed: narrative, prizes and incentives, and emphasising that any bit helps. These negotiation strategies can inform more sophisticated approaches to fundraising within sport (Gladden et al., 2005). The interaction of the constraints that were

discussed within the interviews led to constraint negotiation on the part of Triathlon Pink participants (Jackson et al., 1993). The narratives integrated in fundraising were employed to address interpersonal constraints related to the interest and financial resources among donors. The prizes and incentives that were given to prospective donors in exchange for fundraising dollars can be used to overcome the reluctance to ask for donations among participants. Also, developing the mindset that any contribution is a positive contribution allowed participants to address their own lack of time and a perceived lack of money among donors (Jackson et al., 1993). These negotiation strategies are both behavioural (i.e., narrative and prizes and incentives) and cognitive (i.e., emphasising that any bit helps) (Jackson & Rucks, 1995).

The constraints outlined by interviewees support the notion that fundraising as part of the charity sport event experience places demands on participants (Hendriks & Peelen, 2013). The narrative negotiation strategy suggested that charity sport event participants utilised a personal connection to convey the importance of fundraising and donations, and this supports the idea that personal involvement with a good cause is a factor driving charity sport event participation (Bennett et al., 2007). Similarly, the broader goals for a charity inherent to cause (Filo et al., 2009) aligns with narrative.

Additionally, our preliminary findings reveal the positive event experience described by interviewees, which aligns with the notion that charity sport events can provide a meaningful experience (Filo et al., 2009). In addition, interviewees highlighting the social component of the event, the positive feelings derived from supporting a charity, and the physical challenge and fitness as factors driving their participation reflect motives for charitable giving previously uncovered (e.g., Bennett et al., 2007; Filo et al., 2008). As evidenced by the positive, social and fun event experience interviewees described, successful negotiation of constraints may contribute to satisfaction with an activity (Elkin et al., 2007). Also, the factors contributing to the enjoyable event experience (e.g., good feelings, giving

back, the opportunity to improve fitness) may have provided inspiration to overcome constraints related to fundraising (Aicher et al., 2018; Rice et al., 2018). Overall, the effort put forth by charity sport event participants to negotiate these constraints and fundraise supports the suggestion that supporting the charity is a critical factor in event participation (Won et al., 2011).

### **6.1 Theoretical implications**

We extend existing literature on constraints in the sport event context. While the previous research has focused on constraints to participation in both the charity (Mierhe et al., 2017) and non-charity sport event contexts (Lamont et al., 2012), the current research examined a specific component of the charity sport event experience (i.e., fundraising). Similarities exist between the constraints for event participation and constraints for fundraising. Lack of receptivity among potential donors and perceived lack of money from potential donors represent external factors (Lamont & Kennelly, 2011), and these factors align with the relationships and financial constraint domains respectively (Lamont et al., 2012). Meanwhile, discomfort in asking could be categorised as a personal preference (Lamont & Kennelly, 2011), which may fall under the well-being domain as it relates to managing stress among participants (Lamont et al., 2012). The degree of discomfort in asking that a charity sport event participant experiences may be a result of the fundraising requirement and/or expectations for fundraising that may be inherent to the event. Hence, this factor may be an event specific constraint (Ito & Hikoji, 2018). In terms of constraint negotiation, emphasising that any bit helps reflects flexibility among charity sport event fundraisers (Kennelly et al., 2013). Furthermore, emphasising that any bit helps and offering prizes and incentives would demonstrate a willingness to accept opportunity costs (e.g., potentially accepting smaller donation amounts, exchanging prizes for donations) among charity sport event participants (Kennelly et al., 2013).

The constraints and negotiation strategies uncovered within the current research, along with the interviewees' participation in Triathlon Pink, demonstrate that constraints may not necessarily prevent an individual from engaging in an activity (e.g., fundraising, event participation) (Kay & Jackson, 1991). However, select interviewee's disappointment in their fundraising achievements, as well as all interviewee's depiction of the factors that they needed to overcome, highlight how constraints can potentially negatively impact participation (Spiers & Walker, 2009).

In extending the literature on constraints in sport events, we make a number of contributions to academic work on charity sport events as well as constraints and constraint negotiation in events. First, we extend the existing literature on constraints within charity sport events (e.g., Won et al., 2011) to the fundraising component of the event experience and reveal a number of factors that can impact fundraising as well as strategies for overcoming these challenges. Second, constraints such as lack of receptivity among potential donors and perceived lack of money among potential donors underscores that charity sport event participants are dependent upon others with their fundraising and must devise strategies that navigate this dependence. Third, the employment of storytelling as a constraint negotiation tactic indicates that positioning, and potentially reframing, the activity is necessary for charity sport event participants to optimise fundraising.

Further, we contribute to the literature on the social leverage of sport events (Chalip, 2006; O'Brien & Chalip, 2008), which seeks to understand how sport events can be organised to enhance the social benefits for local communities. O'Brien and Chalip (2008) proposed aligning a sport event with charitable causes (as is the case with charity sport events) as a central leveraging strategy for optimising the social benefits of the event. Empirical evidence also indicates that local residents perceive more social benefits from a sport event if they feel the event provides greater support for affiliated charitable causes (Inoue & Havard, 2014;

Inoue et al., 2018). Although this previous work collectively highlighted the importance of effective fundraising to increase support for causes, there was limited understanding of how charity sport event participants can optimise their fundraising. Findings from the current research thus extend the social leverage work by identifying multiple negotiation strategies that can be facilitated to enhance the fundraising efforts of participants and in turn increase the social benefits of a charity sport event.

## **6.2 Managerial implications**

The findings of the current research can inform strategy and practice for charity sport event managers to address constraints and facilitate negotiation. First, to address the lack of time cited by interviewees, charity sport event managers can provide participants with a fundraising toolkit to support their efforts. To address timing, different toolkits can be provided based upon when the participant registered. For instance, a toolkit can be created and provided for individuals who register before the early bird registration deadline, those who register after the early bird registration deadline, and those who register one month or less prior to the event. Each toolkit can include an adjusted Gantt chart with suggested timelines for fundraising. These timelines can provide shorter deadlines which have been found to increase urgency in fundraising initiatives (Knowles, Servatka, & Sullivan, 2016). The fundraising toolkits could also include educational material to assist participants in hosting raffles and movie nights as incentives to increase fundraising. These materials can provide enhanced education to facilitate overcoming constraints (Alexandris & Carroll, 1999). Fundraising toolkits could assist charity sport event participants in prioritising and optimising fundraising.

The importance of storytelling and narratives within fundraising is well established. Research in this context, however, has primarily focused on charity-to-consumer appeals (Merchant, Ford, & Sargeant, 2010). Charity sport event managers can strive to educate

participants on effective storytelling techniques (e.g., Woodside & Chebat, 2001) to bolster the consumer-to-consumer appeals that charity sport event participants must deliver. Charity sport event participants can be directed to the resources provided by organisations such as Story by Design (<http://storybydesignevents.com/>) and the Association of Fundraising Professionals to improve their capacity to develop narratives to assist with fundraising. Furthermore, social media has been found to be an effective tool for grassroots fundraisers in generating support for charitable causes due, in part, to the storytelling capabilities afforded by these platforms (Bouliane, Minaker, & Haney, 2018). Consequently, charity sport event managers are advised to train participants on storytelling within social media. Social media could also assist in overcoming constraints such as discomfort in asking and lack of time.

The provision of resources to educate charity sport event participants on effective storytelling can be further complemented via instruction on the legitimisation of a paltry donation strategy (Shearman & Yoo, 2007), wherein phrases such as “even a dollar will help” are integrated into fundraising appeals. The legitimisation of a paltry donation strategy has been found to increase the success rate of donation requests, however a number of different conditions should be met to achieve this success (Andrews, Carpenter, Shaw, & Boster, 2008). Hence, training charity sport event participants on this technique is advisable.

To further communicate that a donation of any size represents a contribution and that any bit helps, charity sport event participants should consider not publicising individual donations and their fundraising total, as this has been suggested to potentially intimidate prospective donors as well as encourage free riding (Versterlund, 2003). Accordingly, charity sport event managers should encourage participants to consider withholding their fundraising total and individual donations from their fundraising page. Furthermore, charity sport event managers should communicate that any level of fundraising represents a contribution to avoid

over-reliance on, and potential disappointment from, goal setting in fundraising (Jensen, King, & Carcioppolo, 2013).

Charity sport event managers can incorporate point of sale donations into the registration process to allow charity sport event participants to avoid having to ask for donations. Point of sale donations involve raising money for charity by allowing a customer to round up to an amount of their choice on a transaction, with that chosen amount going to charity (Coleman & Peasley, 2015). In the context of charity sport events, participants can be asked to round up their registration fee to a larger figure (e.g., \$5 - \$50), with this round up representing a donation to charity. Point of sale donations have been found to reduce guilt (e.g., Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2016), and in the context of charity sport events, a participant's apprehension towards fundraising could potentially alleviate these concerns. Incorporating point of sale donations would allow participants to contribute to the cause, while not having to ask for donations from their network.

Finally, while prize incentives were described as an effective negotiation strategy, charity sport event managers should be cautious to not encourage an over-reliance on this mechanism among participants. Prize incentives reflect extrinsic incentives that attempt to leverage extrinsic motives of potential donors (Ariely, Bracha, & Meier, 2007) approached by charity sport event participants. However, extrinsic motivation has been found to be counterproductive in stimulating prosocial behaviour such as supporting a charity (Ariely et al., 2007), while strategies that align with intrinsic motives such as narrative can be most impactful in facilitating giving behaviour (Allison, Davis, Short, & Webb, 2014). Consequently, charity sport event managers should assist participants in striking a balance with their negotiation strategies, whilst emphasising those mechanisms that align with intrinsic motivation.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Three limitations of this research should be acknowledged. First, we collected data from only one stakeholder in the fundraising transaction, charity sport event participants. Donors, charity managers, and event managers all play a role in fundraising and can contribute to the constraints and constraint negotiation strategies as well. Collecting data from these groups can provide additional insight on how to optimise the fundraising experience for all parties involved. Furthermore, while the all-women sample reflects the broader population of Triathlon Pink participants, gender differences do exist between males and females in terms of fundraising behaviours and motivation (De Wit & Bekkers, 2016). Hence the applicability of the findings could be impacted.

Second, the qualitative data collected within the current research did not explore the influence of these constraints on additional participant attitudes or perceptions. In addition, the one-on-one nature of the semi-structured interviews could have translated to increased influence from social desirability bias wherein interviewees were potentially overly positive about the event experience, as well as their attitudes towards fundraising and the fundraising outcomes that they were able to achieve. Collecting data via multiple mechanisms could assist in addressing this.

Third, we did not account for the timing of the event relative to when the interview took place. One could speculate that an event, and the associated fundraising that took place, could be viewed as more arduous shortly after it took place, while a bit more time in between the fundraising and the interview may translate to heightened fondness for the experience. The impact of time on attitudes towards fundraising should be investigated.

#### **6.4 Future research**

With the findings of the current research as a starting point and the limitations outlined above in mind, a number of future research projects can be designed. First, qualitative data via semi-structured interviews or focus groups can be conducted with the



donors contacted by charity sport event participants. Donors can be asked about their attitudes towards being approached for donations by event participants, and the factors that contribute to their decision to donate to an event on behalf of a participant. These data can further inform best practices for event managers to share with fundraisers to determine strategies for approaching donors. A snowballing technique can be employed wherein charity sport event participants provide referrals from their network of donors to take part in the research. Furthermore, the database of donors for the event could be contacted with an invitation to participate.

Second, quantitative data could be collected from charity sport event participants with scales developed based upon the themes uncovered within the current research. These quantitative data could inform examination of the relative strength of the different constraints, as well as the relative importance of the negotiation strategies. Furthermore, these data could facilitate investigating the contribution of these factors to outcome variables such as involvement with the event, likelihood of repeat participation, and involvement with fundraising. Also, future researchers could employ this quantitative data to assess interactions across the different categories of constraints. For instance, within the current research, perceived lack of money and lack of time may reflect both interpersonal and interpersonal constraints that interact together engendering a different form of constraints.

Third, longitudinal data can be collected from charity sport event participants. These data can account for any temporal influence on attitudes and practices towards fundraising. Charity sport event participants who have taken part in the event across multiple years can be interviewed at different times to assess whether repeated participation can contribute to an individual becoming more comfortable with the fundraising process, or perhaps if multiple years of participation can lead to fatigue towards fundraising. In addition, longitudinal data

could be collected shortly after the event, and then 6-12 months following the event, to assess how time and reflection on an event impacts attitudes towards fundraising.

The charity sport event market is becoming increasingly competitive, while fundraising for these events becomes more challenging. We uncovered a collection of factors that contribute to these challenges, as well as the strategies that are employed to overcome each constraint. We hope that further research can be conducted to facilitate positive fundraising outcomes among charity sport event participants, as well as to deliver strategy to event managers to empower fundraisers.

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Table 1

*Triathlon Pink Interviewee Demographics and Fundraising Totals*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Highest Education Level</b>	<b>Number of Years Participated</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Fundraising Amount</b>
Rhonda	Master's Degree	1	Ultra	\$100
Leslie	PhD	1	Ultra	\$30
Angela	PhD	3	Ultra	\$750
		2	Medium	\$350
Danielle	Bachelors			
Tamara	Professional certificate	2	Long	\$70
Katheryn	Bachelor degree	3	Long	\$4,000
Kelly	Master's Degree	4	Ultra	\$100
Sally	Master's Degree	1	Short	\$62
Sydney	Bachelor degree	2	Short	\$500
Krystelle	Bachelor's degree	4	Short	\$62
Kris	Bachelor's degree	2	Short	\$62
Carissa	Professional certificate	1	Ultra	\$100
Jacky	Professional certificate	3	Ultra	\$125
Samantha	Professional certificate	1	Long	\$150
Lucy	Bachelor's degree	1	Ultra	\$100
Cassie	Bachelor's degree	2	Ultra	\$100
Constance	High School	3	Ultra	\$100
Tina	Bachelor's degree	1	Long	\$90
Kim	Bachelor's degree	1	Long	\$90
Hannah	Professional certificate	1	Short	\$50
Joslyn	Bachelor's Degree	2	Long	\$1,286
Andrea	Bachelor's Degree	1	Long	\$200
Rachel	Bachelor's Degree	3	Medium	\$67
Renee	Bachelor's Degree	2	Short	\$62
Jolene	Master's Degree	1	Short	\$62
Marcy	High School	2	Medium	\$100
Layla	Bachelor's Degree	1	Long	\$100